



Cahiers de recherches médiévales et humanistes

Journal of medieval and humanistic studies

19 | 2010

Les îles britanniques : espaces et identités

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Electronic version

URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/crm/12011>

DOI: 10.4000/crm.12011

ISSN: 2273-0893

Publisher

Classiques Garnier

Printed version

Date of publication: 30 June 2010

Number of pages: 249-266

ISSN: 2115-6360

Electronic reference

M. Cecilia Gaposchkin, « Place, Status, and Experience in the Miracles of Saint Louis », *Cahiers de recherches médiévales et humanistes* [Online], 19 | 2010, Online since 30 June 2013, connection on 01 May 2019. URL : <http://journals.openedition.org/crm/12011> ; DOI : 10.4000/crm.12011



Place, Status, and Experience in the Miracles of Saint Louis

Abstract : This contribution explores the relationship between social status and the experience of the miraculous at the tomb of Louis IX (d. 1270) at St.-Denis and elsewhere. Drawing on the surviving evidence from the witness testimony at the canonization inquest of 1282-1283 and other extant accounts of miracles, it tries to unpack how men and women of different stations had different experiences in seeking out and obtaining miracles through Louis' intercession, and the relationship between their status, those experiences, and their understanding of Louis as a saint. Men and women of lower station were less influenced by the narrative and reputation of Louis' life, and were drawn to the tomb primarily by his reputation as a miracle worker. By contrast, elite men and women remembered Louis, often making reference to the reputation of the sanctity of his life. They were able to experience Louis as a miracle worker without having to travel to St.-Denis, either through a vision or through privileged access to relics. The result is that for the non-elite, Louis was essentially unindividuated as a saint, whereas he retained an individualized saintly identity for the (comparatively fewer) elite who testified to miracles. Thus, for all intents and purposes, it was only the social elite who experienced and remembered Louis as a « royal » saint.

Résumé : Cette contribution explore le rapport entre le rang social et l'expérience du miraculeux à la tombe de Saint Louis (mort en 1270) à Saint-Denis et ailleurs. S'appuyant sur les témoignages du procès de canonisation (1282-1283) et d'autres récits de ses miracles, cet article tente de mettre en lumière comment les expériences des hommes et des femmes appartenant à de différentes classes sociales variaient quant aux miracles recherchés et obtenus par l'intercession de Saint Louis. On s'interroge sur la relation entre leur classe sociale, leurs expériences des miracles, et leurs vues de la sainteté du roi. Les membres des classes sociales inférieures n'étaient pas trop conscients des textes sur la vie royale de Saint Louis ; c'était plutôt la réputation des miracles effectués par le roi à sa tombe qui attirait le menu peuple. Par contre, les membres de l'élite affichaient un clair souvenir du roi comme individu, se rappelant le caractère sanctifié de sa vie. Cette connaissance du roi leur permettait d'avoir une expérience directe des ses miracles, ou par une vision ou par un accès privilégié à ses reliques ; un pèlerinage à Saint-Denis n'était pas toujours nécessaire. Le résultat de ces faits est que pour le menu peuple Saint-Louis était un saint tout court, sans trop de traits individualisés, tandis que pour les classes supérieures (la minorité des miraculés) le saint était fortement individualisé. Donc c'était surtout dans l'estimation des gens d'élite que Saint Louis était un « saint royal ».

Louis IX died in North Africa while on crusade in 1270 to the expectation that he would be canonized.* Not long after his bones were returned to France and

* I thank Elizabeth A. R. Brown, Sharon Farmer, Sean Field, Susan Ridyard, and especially Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski for reading earlier drafts of this paper. I have cited miracles both by their sequence number in the account, and the page number of the edition I have used. I use the following abbreviations :

interred at the royal abbey of St.-Denis, an inquest – first secret and informal and later public and formal – was initiated to investigate his sanctity. At the Abbey, between March of 1282 and May of 1283, the official inquest into Louis' sanctity was overseen by three papally appointed bishops. As had been established over the course of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the commission sought to examine the evidence of both his character in life and his miracles after death to establish whether or not Louis was a saint. Associates of the king testified to the exceptional character, charity, devotion, and humility that he displayed during his life. Men, women, and children who had benefited from Louis' miracles gave testimony of their experiences. Fragments of the *procès verbal* relating to three of Louis' miracles published by Henri-François Delaborde in 1896 represented only a fraction of the entirety of documentation, but the other miracles were redacted by Guillaume de Saint-Pathus from the report sent to the papacy, whose account relates sixty-five miracles to which witnesses made claim. Guillaume's redaction is extraordinarily textured and rich, and we are assured of essential accuracy by its comparison with the fragments that do survive. At the same time, a parallel effort to record Louis' miracles was made at the royal court and survives as part of Guillaume de Chartres' *vie* of Louis¹. After Louis' canonization, rival cult sites established at Poissy and Evreux resulted in further miracles and thus new miracle accounts, and although these are not nearly as textured or rich as sources, they point to the spread of Louis' cult beyond St.-Denis in the period after 1297².

Louis' status as a saint depended on many things – devoted constituencies, his notoriety as a just king and as a crusader, the political realities of saint making – but integral to both his reputation and his canonical status were his miracles. Sharon

RHF = Martin Bouquet, ed. *Recueil des historiens des Gaules et de la France*, 24 vols., Paris, 1738, reprint, Gregg, Famborough, 1967.

Fragments = Henri-François Delaborde. « Fragments de l'enquête faite à Saint-Denis en 1282 en vue de la canonisation de saint Louis », *Mémoires de la Société de l'histoire de Paris et de l'Ile-de-France*, 23, 1896, p. 1-71.

GSP = Percival B. Fay, ed. *Guillaume de Saint-Pathus : Les miracles de saint Louis*, Paris, Champion, 1932. (Note that the miracles were also published in RHF, v. 20, p. 121-189.)

GC = Guillaume de Chartres. *De vita et actibus inclitae recordationis regis Francorum*, RHF, v. 20, p. 27-44.

Farmer = Farmer, Sharon. *Surviving Poverty in Medieval Paris : Gender, Ideology, and the Daily Lives of the Poor*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 2002.

Chennaf/Redon = Chennaf, Sarah, and Odile Redon. « Les Miracles De Saint Louis », *Les Miracles Miroirs Des Corps*, Paris, Université de Paris VIII, 1983, p. 53-85.

Le Goff = J. Le Goff, *Saint Louis*, translated by Gareth Evan Gollrad, Notre Dame, Ind., Notre Dame University Press, 2009.

¹ Fragments, GSP, GC.

² For Evreux, see *Miracula facta in domo Fratrum Praedicatorum Ebroicensium*, RHF, v. 20, p. 41-44 ; also printed in the *Acta Sanctorum*, AASS, August 25, p. 569-571 ; see also RHF v. 23, p. 167 (recorded in the liturgical lections). The evidence for miracles at Poissy are found in the lections for the office for *Ludovicus Decus* ; printed at RHF v. 23, p. 165-167 ; see p. 166-167 for Poissy miracles that occurred « in the presence of the king and queen ». Other Poissy miracles were recorded in the lections for Translation Office after 1306, (BLQRF), found in BnF Lat 14511, fol. 180^v.

Farmer, who drew on both the Delaborde fragments and Guillaume de Saint-Pathus' account in her reconstruction of the social world of the working and non-working poor, showed how the men and women who went to St.-Denis to seek a cure tended to be of lower social station³. Elsewhere, I have looked at the different ways different constituencies (Cistercians, Franciscans, the royal court, etc.) understood and experienced Louis as a saint in different ways⁴. The issue this piece seeks to explore is how the experience (or experiences) of the miraculous animated Louis' identity (or identities) as a saint⁵, and how the historical experience of Louis' miracles intersected with the social status of those who sought and received miracles. As we know from Farmer, most examples of elite men and women invoking Louis' aid involved miracles that were carried out at the place of invocation – at home, or on the road – without the hopeful having to make his or her way to St.-Denis; in turn, there is meager evidence of the non-elite, non-propertied, receiving miracles elsewhere than at the *locus sanctus* (before 1297, St.-Denis; and later, the altar of Saint Louis at Evreux or the baptismal font at St.-Louis of Poissy) through mere invocation; of the seventeen (of the sixty-five in Guillaume's account) that we can establish as owning property who received a miracle from Louis *at any location*, or of the fifty-three of all social standing who received a miracle at St.-Denis,⁶ only four were propertied men or women who went to St.-Denis as part of their miracle experience, these included a local butcher and a seamstress who, while not poor, were also not exceptionally elite⁷. Three of these did so only after their

³ Farmer, p. 51-55. Evidence suggests that this is generally true in the Later Middle Ages. See for instance R. C. Finucane, *Miracles and Pilgrims: Popular Beliefs in Medieval England*, Totowa N.J., Rowman and Littlefield, 1977, p. 131-151. Paolo Golinelli examines the role of social status in the choice of witnesses in Italian canonization trials. P. Golinelli, «Social Aspects in Some Italian Canonization Trials: The Choice of Witnesses», *Procès de canonisation au Moyen Âge: Aspects juridiques et religieux – Medieval Canonization Processes: legal and religious aspects*, ed. G. Klaniczay, *Collection de l'École Française de Rome*, Rome, École Française de Rome, 2004, p. 165-180.

⁴ M. C. Gaposchkin, *The Making of Saint Louis: Kingship, Sanctity, and Crusade in the Later Middle Ages*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 2008.

⁵ On Louis' miracles, see Farmer, Chennaf/Redon, Le Goff. Le Goff's ideas were originally published as J. Le Goff, «Saint de l'Église et saint du peuple: les miracles officiels de saint Louis entre sa mort et sa canonisation (1270-1297)», *Histoire sociale, sensibilités collectives et mentalités: Mélanges Robert Mandrou*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1985, p. 169-180. Le Goff's ideas are also available in the original French version of his biography J. Le Goff, *Saint Louis*, Paris, Fayard, 1996, p. 844-857. See further, N. Chareyron, «Représentation du corps souffrant dans la Vie et les Miracles de Saint Louis», *Cahiers de Recherches Médiévales (XII^e - XV^e s.)*, 4, 1997, p. 175-187; M. A. Dollfus, «Miracles de Saint Louis», *Bulletin de la société nationale des antiquaires de France*, 24, 1971, p. 24-35; H. Skoda, «Representations of disability in the thirteenth-century *Miracles de Saint Louis*», *Essays on Disability in the Middle Ages*, ed. J. Eyler Burlington VT, Ashgate, forthcoming.

⁶ Le Goff, p. 695, counts fifty-three healed at the tomb. Chennaf/Redon, p. 84, note 32, count forty-six healed at St.-Denis.

⁷ Elite who invoked Louis or otherwise benefited from a miracle elsewhere than St.-Denis: GSP Mirs. 1, 12, 19, 29, 38, 40, 46, 50, 60, 61, 62, 64, 65. Elite who went to St.-Denis to effect a miracle: Mirs. 3, 13, 24, 53. Farmer applied rigorous analytical standards in

cure. It was, thus, the less economically fortunate who tended to spend time at the tomb in hope and expectations, and it was their experiences that created the culture of the miraculous at St.-Denis.

For these men and women, Louis' identity as a miracle-worker was largely disembodied from his identity as a king, or even his identity as a saint. There is no evidence at all that devotion to Louis or belief in his sanctity had anything to do with his biographical identity – his royalty, his reputation as a crusader, or his humble devotion to the poor. For these, what mattered was rather, and merely, that he was local and that he was effective. The non-elite who testified to miracles lived in or near St.-Denis or Paris⁸. Their interest or awareness in Louis did not precede the need for a miracle, and their devotion was not necessarily rooted in the aspects of his life that people had associated with his sainthood. The experience that most people who received the benefit of a miracle cure had at the tomb was ritualized and formulaic. Their experience was prescribed by the spatial environment, and the expected pre-miracle and post-miracle behavior that amounted to ritual supplication. By contrast, for the elite – those of means, or those connected with the court, and especially those who had *known* Louis during the saint's life time – the miraculous experience was individual, intimate, emotional; it was characterized at times by its visual (or visionary), rather than ritual aspects. And it was above all personalized and personal. Here, Saint Louis retained his personality and his royal identity.

Rumor miraculorum

By the late thirteenth century, the first stage in the steps towards official canonization was the *fama* of sanctity that was fueled by the *rumor* of miracles.⁹ Louis' reputation for sanctity pre-dated even his death, and occasional miracles occurred as his bones were transported back from Tunis¹⁰. Early on an association between Louis' ability to cure scrofula in his capacity as king – the famed royal touch that the Capetians claimed as particular to their sacral status – may have animated his miraculous identity as a saint. In Italy people suffering from scrofula were cured when they kissed the *châsse* as it was transported back to France¹¹. In

characterizing witnesses/miracle recipients as either propertied or non-propertied. I have given myself some license in being a bit looser (and admittedly, more impressionistic) in my characterization of « elite » versus « non-elite ».

⁸ Poor devotees who came from farther away did not generally *begin* their journey in order to go to St.-Denis for a miracle. See for instance Mîrs. 14, 15, 19.

⁹ E. W. Kemp, *Canonization and Authority in the Western Church*, London, Oxford University Press, 1948; reprint, New York: 1980, p. 56-106; P.-A. Sigal, *L'homme et le miracle dans la France médiévale (XI^e - XII^e siècle)*, Paris, Les Éditions du Cerf, 1985, p. 165-225; A. Vauchez, *Sainthood in the later Middle Ages*, trans. J. Birrell Cambridge, UK, Cambridge University Press, 1997, p. 33-57. Also of interest is J. Sumption, *Pilgrimage: An Image of Mediaeval Religion*, Totowa, N.J., Rowman and Littlefield, 1976, p. 146-167.

¹⁰ Gaposchkin, *Making*, p. 20; W. C. Jordan, *Louis IX and the Challenge of the Crusade: A Study in Rulership*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1979, p. 182. The pre-St.-Denis miracles are GSP Mîrs. 64 and 65 p. 193-195; Jean de Vignay also relates two other pre-St.-Denis miracles; RHF v. 23, p. 69-70.

¹¹ GSP Mir. 4I, p. 188. Le Goff, p. 697, Chennaf/Redon, p. 62.

this way, at St.-Denis his miraculous identity was initially linked to this royal identity. Yet, although the young Gile of St.-Denis heard, on the day of Louis' burial in the monastery, that people with scrofula could be cured by merely touching Louis' *châsse*¹², the association was soon lost, and his reputation as a miracle-worker took shape devoid of his earlier, living, royal, or saintly identity.

It was word of mouth – *fama* – that fed Louis' growing reputation as a miracle worker in the 1270s and early 1280s. The reports of miracles dated to 1271 suggest how early the rumor mill turned in St.-Denis and around Paris. « When the bones of blessed saint Louis were brought to the land and it was commonly said at Paris that miracles were done at the tomb of this very same. »¹³ So, for instance, in Pontoise (about fifteen miles from St.-Denis), a woman who had lost her sight and was in church praying to the Virgin, met a man who said he was coming from St.-Denis and that he had seen great miracles done at the tomb ; and when this woman, Agnes, asked him what kind of miracles, he answered that he had seen the blind recover sight and the lame walk again. Agnes then « stretched her hands to the heavens and vowed to God and to blessed Louis that on the following day she would make the journey and visit the tomb of this very blessed Saint Louis, even if she had to go on hands and feet. »¹⁴ Again and again witnesses explained how, after suffering from this or that malady, they « heard » or « were told » that miracles were being done at Louis' tomb. Young Eidelot's despairing parents « had heard it said that many miracles were being done at the tomb of the Blessed Louis »¹⁵ ; Hodierne was lame for two years before she « had heard that miracles were done at the tomb » and sought out Louis' aid¹⁶. Even as late as 1282, Tiffany, who lived close-by (in St.-Denis), was prompted to go to Louis' tomb only when another woman, Emmelot, told her how she had been cured of disfigurement there¹⁷. In that same year, another local woman (Marie), brought her son to a series of other sanctuaries further away (« St.-Sulpice and St.-Leonard and other places where people go on pilgrimages in this land, but these did nothing for the child »¹⁸) before a neighbor suggested she try Louis : « And finally, the neighbors of this child's mother said to her, 'We have a good saint in our church at St.-Denis ; carry your child to the tomb of Saint Louis, so that Our Lord will see him delivered by his prayers.' »¹⁹

¹² GSP Mir. 3, p. 13. See also Mir. 22, p. 76, for a child with scrofula. His mother brought Jean first to the king in Paris and the king « touched him as is customary, but he profited not from this. » Discussed in Chennaff/Redon, p. 62.

¹³ GSP Mir. 35, p. 105 ; for miracles from 1271, see also Mir. 20, p. 69 ; Mir. 30, p. 92 ; Mir. 52, p. 160-161.

¹⁴ GSP Mir. 49, p. 181 : « et tendi ses mains au ciel et voua a Dieu et au benoiet saint Loÿs que el jour ensivant ele emprendroit la voie et visiteroit le tombel d'icelui benoiet saint Loÿs, se ele i devoit aler aus mains et a piez. »

¹⁵ GSP Mir. 11, p. 35 : « eust oï dire que pluseurs miracles fussent fez au tombel du benoiet saint Loÿs ».

¹⁶ GSP Mir. 32, p. 97 : « eust oÿ que miracles estoient fez au tombel... »

¹⁷ GSP Mir. 4, p. 16-17.

¹⁸ GSP Mir. 23 : « le porta a l'eglise de Saint Souplice, a l'eglise de Saint Liennard et ailleurs la ou l'en fet pelerinages en cest païs, mes ce ne proufita riens au dit enfant. »

¹⁹ GSP Mir. 23 : « Et en la parfin les voisines de la mere du dit enfant li distrent : « Nos avons bons sainz en nostre eglise de Saint Denis ; portez vostre enfant au tombel du benoiet saint

News of a miracle spread quickly throughout the church and town, and might be followed in turn by local skepticism (to be overcome), or by communal celebration²⁰. The *miraculé* in turn fueled Louis' reputation by boasting of Louis' intercessory power. Thomas, a pig-herd from Voudai, told friends back home that « Louis of St.-Denis was doing great miracles, » and the next day that Louis had « returned his sight »²¹. When Eidelot's parents returned to their parish in Paris, they told their neighbors that she had been delivered by Louis' merits²². One of the questions that the inquisitors sought to establish was whether there was public consensus that a cure was a miracle of Saint Louis, and not, for instance, the work of doctors, or a fabrication of the part of the *miraculé* ; whether a cure was publicly and commonly considered to have been effected by Louis²³. The result is evidence of much discussion in the community after the fact.

But in all, the sense of these reports is not that individuals were prompted to seek out Louis' intercession out of a pre-existing devotion to the saint king – because of his reputation as (saintly) king during his life or a conviction in his sanctity based on the quality of his character and devotion. Instead, Louis came to their attention as a miracle worker in the context of their own suffering, and it was his thaumaturgical reputation that drew them to St.-Denis.

This interpretation of an essentially unindividuated sanctity amongst those who sought supplication at the tomb is bolstered by what we can discern of how these miracle recipients invoked Louis – that is, what they called him when imploring his aid. Guillaume's account repeatedly reports that the devotee invoked simply « the blessed Saint Louis » (*le benoit saint Loys*).²⁴ The inquisitors asked specifically how a supplicant invoked Louis, and in several instances these quotations survive in the fragments or made their way into Guillaume's account : thus Emmelot of Chaumont implored « 'My Lord, our Sire' and trusted that 'the Virgin Mary and the blessed Saint Louis will deliver me soon' »²⁵. Tiffany spoke of how she had « great faith that blessed Saint Louis would deliver me. »²⁶ Marote's parents implored « The good Lord God and the blessed Saint Louis, » and « my Lord

Loys, que Nostre Seigneur le voile ilecques delivrer par ses proieres. » For further examples of supplicants hearing about miracles, see Mir. 8, p. 28 ; Mir. 9, p. 31-32 ; Mir. 10, p. 35 ; Mir. 16, p. 56 ; Mir. 17, p. 59 ; Mir. 22, p. 76 ; Mir. 24, p. 82 ; Mir. 31, p. 95 ; Mir. 33, p. 99 ; Mir. 34, p. 10 ; Mir. 35, p. 105 ; Mir. 39, p. 120 ; Mir. 41, p. 128 ; Mir. 42, p. 132 ; Mir. 48, p. 145 ; Mir. 52, p. 161. A counter example is found at Mir. 31, p. 96, where Guiars was said to have been aware of Louis when he was alive.

²⁰ GSP Mir. 24, p. 82. Chennaf/Redon, p. 77.

²¹ GSP Mir. 8, p. 29.

²² GSP Mir. 11, p. 37. For other examples, see GSP Mir. 13, p. 43 ; Mir. 16, p. 57 ; Mir. 39, p. 124 ; Mir. 51, p. 157 ; Mir. 59, p. 184, and others.

²³ Frag. N° 27 (p. 22) ; The formulation that a miracle was commonly said to be owing to Louis' sanctity came often at the end of the miracle account : for instance, GSP Mir. 8, p. 28 ; Mir. 9, p. 32 ; Mir. 12, p. 37 ; Mir. 32, p. 98 ; Mir. 33, p. 100 ; Mir. 34, p. 104.

²⁴ For examples of Guillaume's direct quotation of an invocation : GSP Mirs. 2, p. 9, 11 ; Mir. 4, 17 ; Mir. 5, p. 21 ; Mir. 7, 26 ; Mir. 10, p. 34 ; Mir. 11, p. 37 ; Mir. 30, p. 92.

²⁵ GSP Mir. 2, p. 11 : « Mes nostre sire Diex » dist ele, » et la Virge Marie et le benoiet saint Loys me deliverront tost. »

²⁶ GSP Mir. 4, p. 17 : « gram fiancé que le benoiet saint Loys me deliverra »

Saint Louis» for their daughter²⁷. Guillot, whose right foot was impaired, was told by a friend to «go behind that tomb with much devotion and prayer that God will see you delivered by the merits of blessed Saint Louis.»²⁸ In general these invocations are formulaic – accurate, but anemic; they are part of the expected narrative of the miraculous or the result of the prompting of the inquisitorial questions. An exception comes from a Cistercian *conversa* called Clemence who invoked Louis as «*roi saint Loÿs*» [emphasis mine], though this might be explained by her personal connection to the court; prior to her invocation she had consulted the (infamous, and ultimately ill-fated) royal physician and advisor Pierre de Broce²⁹.

One of the questions the bishops routinely asked of witnesses was whether he or she believed Louis to be a saint, and why? Here the answers appear schooled, consistently mirroring the response of Robert of Cantarage, a local craftsman and witness to Miracle 2. When asked «if he believed that the said Lord Louis was a saint, he said that he thought so on account of the miracles that he saw and heard done at his tomb.»³⁰ It was the rumor and knowledge of these miracles, then, not the mystique of a devout life, that for this group defined Louis' sanctity. This is in contrast to one of St.-Denis own monks, who, in answering the very same question, associated Louis' sanctity more precisely with the qualities of his life that had afforded him his saintly reputation to begin with. When Guillaume, the Abbey's cellarer, who had witnessed Amelot's miracle (n° 2), was asked why he believed Louis was a saint, he answered «on account of the miracles that have been seen at his tomb and what is said to have been done there, and on account of his many good works, which he did in his life, giving great alms, as the witness sees, solemnly and devotedly listening to the divine office, exhibiting his great humility and doing other things that the catholic king and good servant of Christ should do.»³¹

At the tomb

Pilgrims who came to St.-Denis seeking a miracle found Louis' tomb within the monk's choir beneath the crossing. In 1264, as part of a massive rebuilding campaign, and in an effort to secure royal burial thereafter, Abbot Matthew of Vendôme had the royal tombs reinterred, giving them pride of place in the very heart of the church, whereby the tombs of Carolingian and Capetian kings were placed between the high (or main) altar of the choir at the eastern edge of the

²⁷ GSP Mir. 7, p. 21 : «Beau Sire Diex et le benoiet saint Loÿs» and «Mon seigneur saint Loys.»

²⁸ GSP Mir. 7, p. 26 : «va arriere au dit tombel a grand devocion et prie que Dieu te voile delivrer par les merites du benoiet saint Loÿs.»

²⁹ GSP Mir. 21, p. 73, 74. On Pierre de la Broce, see first W. C. Jordan, «The Struggle for Influence at the Court of Philip III : Pierre de la Broce and the French Aristocracy», *French Historical Studies*, 24, n° 3, 2001, p. 439-68.

³⁰ Fragments, p. 26, n° 52 : *Interrogatus si credit dictum dominum Ludovicum esse sanctum, dicit quod sic credit propter miracula que vidit et audivit esse facta ad tumulum ejus*. For other witnesses responding in essentially the same manner, see n° 94, 110, 119, 155, 172, 188, 230, 252, 262, 295, 311.

³¹ Fragments, p. 28, n° 76.

crossing and the Trinity (or Matutinal) altar, between the monks' choir to the west and the raised chancel to the east³². In 1271 Louis' bones had been placed in a simple above-ground sepulcher next to those of his father and grandfather (Louis VIII and Philip Augustus) in the crossing. Louis had requested a simple, unadorned tomb³³, and it did not initially bear a sculpted gisant. Rather, the tomb was topped with some kind of wooden tabernacle that had rings attached which supplicants might hold or which they might use to hoist themselves to their feet³⁴. A sort of wooden shrine sat atop the sepulcher, beneath which a supplicant could lie prostrate such that the supplicant was on top of Louis' tomb³⁵.

The internal divisions of the abbey are unclear, and probably varied on any given day, but since laymen would have unfettered access to neither the choir nor the chancel, and because of the many above-ground sepulchers inhabiting the available ground, the space itself would have been fairly constrained. The accounts speak often of a beneficiary lying down alongside or sitting among a larger group of sick people – *mout malades*³⁶. The fragments from the *procès verbal* have witnesses attesting to the crowds in the church seeing the miraculous event, and also demonstrate how friends and neighbors dropped in to see how things were going. In general a recipient (and their companions) expected a stay of nine days; the nine-days of prayer (the *novena*) was in line with medieval praxis in general, and at St.-Denis even those who were « healed » in shorter time stayed to complete nine days of devoted prayer to Louis³⁷. Some spent up to a month or more³⁸. Given how often

³² The best treatments of this are now E. A. R. Brown, *Saint-Denis : La basilique*, Paris, Zodiaque, 2001, p. 384-398; W. C. Jordan, *A Tale of Two Monasteries : Westminster and Saint-Denis in the Thirteenth Century*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2009, p. 114-118. See also A. Erlande-Brandenburg, *Le roi est mort : étude sur les funérailles, les sépultures et les tombeaux des rois de France jusqu'à la fin du XIII^e siècle*, Genève, Droz, 1975; G. S. Wright, « The Royal Tomb Program in the Reign of St. Louis », *Art Bulletin*, 56, 1974, p. 224-243. On Louis' tomb, E. A. R. Brown, « The Chapels and Cult of Saint Louis at Saint-Denis », *Mediaevalia*, 10, 1984, p. 279-331; A. Erlande-Brandenburg, « Le tombeau de Saint Louis », *Bulletin Monumental*, 126, 1968, p. 7-36; *Gisants et tombeaux de la Basilique de Saint-Denis*, Seine-Saint-Denis, Archives Départementales de la Seine-Saint-Denis, 1975; G. S. Wright, « The Tomb of Saint Louis », *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 34, 1971, p. 65-82. For the names and placement of altars, see E. B. Foley, *The First Ordinary of the Royal Abbey of St.-Denis in France (Paris, Bibliothèque Mazarine 526), Spicilegium Friburgense : Texts Concerning the History of Christian Life*, Fribourg, The University Press, 1990, p. 184-193.

³³ GB vita, RHF v. 20, p. 10.

³⁴ For the absence of gisant, GSP Mir. 34, p. 102. For the wooden cover with rings, Mir. 2, p. 11, and Fragments, n° 27, p. 22. See also, GSP Mir. 8, p. 28; Mir. 11, p. 36; Fragment, n° 132-133, p. 35, n° 132; GSP Mir. 18, p. 63.

³⁵ GSP Mir. 34, p. 102 and Mir. 39, p. 123.

³⁶ For example, GSP Mir. 8, p. 31; Mir. 11, p. 36.

³⁷ GSP Mir. 53, p. 169; Mir. 54, p. 171; Mir. 59, p. 183. On the *novena* see Hilgers, J. (1911), « Novena » in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, New York, Robert Appleton Company. Retrieved September 6, 2009 from *New Advent* :

<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11141b.htm>.

miracle-recipients mentioned the singing of mass or an office, the rhythms and sounds of liturgical ritual seem to have animated their time at the tomb, perhaps bringing solace; certainly marking the passage of time³⁹. Friends, family, and neighbors might carry someone in on a stretcher and place the supplicant down next to Louis' tomb⁴⁰. Others came daily to bring a supplicant something to eat⁴¹. The church was also a place where one received alms, which were distributed daily at high mass (and « from which » one miracle recipient explained, he was able « to buy some bread »)⁴². Pilgrims to Louis' tomb would eat only once a day⁴³. Many – and in particular the parents of ailing children – stayed in the crossing as well. If true, it must have been somewhat cramped.

Access was regulated. The chancel (or « chevet », at the eastern end) was wholly blocked off to the public by the traditional « cloture » – the enclosure found in many high medieval churches that separated the choir from the public space of the church. But the evidence of the miracles shows that the space of the monks' choir, which was surrounded by a choir screen that encompassed both the area of the transept crossing and the high altar, was accessible by suppliant pilgrims⁴⁴. As early as 1271 the monks had set up a system whereby supplicants had to, in effect, apply to stay by the tomb. The prior had appointed Thomas of Hauxton, a guard who was charged with looking after those who came to the tomb so that they would not be overly crowded⁴⁵. One had to have permission to get in; when Amelot, who came to St.-Denis seeking aid for a debilitating deformity of the back, assured him that she had the faith and hope that she might be delivered by Saint Louis, she was granted permission to lie by the tomb⁴⁶. Gated entrances could be found that allowed access from the side aisles in the transept, but these were opened and closed in order to regulate access and crowding. When Amile's husband and brother-in-law came to see how she was faring, they could see Amile but could not get past the barrier to talk with her⁴⁷. After Perette's miracle cure, crowds rushed to see her but couldn't get in past the closed doors⁴⁸. Once inside, though, pilgrims could move freely from

See also Sigal, *L'homme et le miracle*, p. 138-44; Vauchez, *Sainthood in the later Middle Ages*, p. 445.

³⁸ GSP Mir. 16, p. 56.

³⁹ For example: GSP Mir. 2, p. 9; Mir. 4, p. 17; Mir. 10, p. 34; Mir. 14, p. 48; Mir. 23, p. 80; Mir. 48, p. 178; Mir. 52, p. 162; Mir. 58, p. 178; Mir. 59, p. 182; Mir. 63, p. 192.

⁴⁰ GSP Mir. 2, p. 9.

⁴¹ GSP Mir. 49, p. 183.

⁴² GSP Mir. 18, p. 61 (« aumones de quoi il fist acheter du pain »); Mir. 15, p. 52; Mir. 41, p. 129. The wealthy, in turn, gave alms; GSP Mir. 13, p. 44.

⁴³ GSP Mir. 2, p. 9; 4, p. 17.

⁴⁴ C. Bruzelius, *The Thirteenth-century Church at St-Denis*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1985, p. 38-41.

⁴⁵ GSP Mir. 5, p. 19; Fragments, p. 7; Guillaume calls him « Thoumas de Hystoirie », but he appears as Thomas de Hoston in the inquest fragments. Delaborde (Fragments, p. 19) identifies him as Thomas of Hauxton, from Cambridge. On the « office » of guardian of the relics (sometimes fulfilled by the sacristan), see Sigal, *L'homme et le miracle*, p. 123-26.

⁴⁶ GSP Mir. 5, p. 18-20. Fragments, p. 19 (n° 1).

⁴⁷ GSP Mir. 42, p. 161.

⁴⁸ GSP Mir. 54, p. 170.

the tomb to the high altar. At high mass, which on most days occurred (depending on the day) between terce and none at the high altar at the northern most wall of the crossing, the pilgrims were asked to clear the area, although they were permitted to return afterwards⁴⁹. At night – at Vespers – the monks closed the crossing and the supplicant pilgrims waiting at the tomb were asked to leave the building⁵⁰. Those who lived in the village would go home for the night, and others might be able to stay with friends or in a hostel⁵¹. Yet others – like the itinerant eighteen-year-old Jehan de la Haie, who had no money for a hostel – stayed the night on the front porch of the church, waiting for the Abbey to reopen the next morning so that they could return to the tomb⁵².

Although we have occasional glimpses of spontaneity, the experience of the miracle recipient was by and large prescribed, informed by devotional rituals of the church⁵³. Our sense of the extent of the ritualized experience may be exacerbated by the narrative formula dictated by both the questions asked at the inquest and the genre of miracle accounts. But the bulk of miracle recipients details an experience that followed some version of a basic pattern informed by the longstanding and widespread practice of pilgrimage and saints' cults: the vow, confession, travel to St.-Denis, time at the tomb in prayer, a miraculous moment of the cure, a move to the high altar, a return to Louis' tomb in thanksgiving prayer. The gestures of prayer and prostration were so clearly prescribed that a young man, both deaf and mute, was able to effect Louis' intercession through their imitation without understanding the faith that they signified⁵⁴. Another youth, Michelet, lay down, stretched out, on the cold stone floor in still prostration such that his sister worried that he was in fact dead.⁵⁵ Orange, a wool-worker whose arm-ailment made employment impossible, «because it was said in Paris that miracles were being done at Louis' tomb», made confession to a priest at St.-Gervais, vowed herself to Louis, and bearing a candle the size and length of her arm, walked to St.-Denis «barefoot and in a sackcloth» (not an atypical ritual mode)⁵⁶. Once at the tomb, supplicants spent their time in

⁴⁹ GSP Mir. 10, p. 34; Mir. 41, p. 129. Fragments, p. 51, n° 207 (=GSP Mir.41). Although note that, Mir. 42, p. 133, speaks of Jehenne de Sarris who was at the tomb during the singing of high mass. On the timing of high mass, see Foley, *The First Ordinary of St.-Denis*, p. 106.

⁵⁰ GSP Mir. 52, p. 161-162; Mir. 53, p. 167; Mir. 59, p. 183. Except, note that in Mir. 53, p. 166, the *miraculé* was able to put her head on the tomb during Vespers. The practice of making the sanctuary inaccessible at night seems atypical. Sigal, *L'homme et le miracle*, p. 127-130.

⁵¹ People going home: GSP Mir. 3, p. 14; Mir. 4, p. 17; Mir. 58, p. 178. Mir. 53, p. 167. People staying somewhere in town: Mir. 5, p. 19; Mir. 22, p. 76; Mir. 54, p. 170; Mir. 58, p. 178.

⁵² GSP Mir. 17, p. 61; see also Mir. 63, p. 191; Mir. 49, p. 149.

⁵³ This section is largely taken from Chennaf/Redon, p. 68-79. For instances of spontaneity, GSP Mir. 54, p. 170 and GSP Mir. 59, p. 182.

⁵⁴ GSP Mir. 5. For translation, see S. Farmer, «A Deaf-mute's Story», *Medieval Christianity in Practice*, ed. M. Rubin Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2009, p. 203-208. On the remarkable story of this miracle, see Farmer, p. 74-81.

⁵⁵ GSP Mir. 48, p. 146.

⁵⁶ GSP Mir. 58, p. 178. «Orange emprist la voie de venir a Saint Denis nus piez et en langes au dit tombel.» For another example of sack cloth and ashes see: GSP Mir. 63, p. 191.

prayer. Pain might well intensify before a miracle was granted, coming in waves, a test to devotion and commitment, only to be finally relieved by Louis' intercession⁵⁷. With the advent of the miracle cure, its recipient would get up – always on his or her own and without the help of the crutches, aids, or associates who had brought them to Louis' sepulcher – and would walk the short distance (described as three *toises*) to the high altar, before returning to the altar to pray and give thanks to Louis, kiss the tomb⁵⁸. Jeanne went to the altar of Saint Denis all the way at the east end of the chancel, clasped her hands in prayer and thanked Saint Louis, and then went to the high altar to light candles⁵⁹. Perrete circled the high altar three times without her crutches⁶⁰. Orange was able, for the first time in three years, to clasp her hands in prayer and make the sign of the cross⁶¹. At Evreux, the practice was to walk around the altar. When the monks recognized that a genuine miracle had taken place, they would ring the abbey bells *propter miraculum*⁶².

The desire for and importance of physical proximity, of contact, of touch, that we associate with late medieval pilgrimage and piety in general is in evidence at the tomb. Beyond the very fact of the pilgrim's desire to be near – alongside, on top of, next to – Louis' relics, anecdotal evidence attests to the importance of the tactility of proximity in the devotional and miraculous experience. Marote's parents carried her to Louis' tomb, and it was not until they «placed the child's mouth on the tomb» that she was cured⁶³. Most of the accounts speak of how supplicants placed themselves alongside the tomb, but Marguerite de la Magdaleine, a destitute woman from the *Filles Dieu* of Paris, actually stretched herself out on top of the sepulcher.⁶⁴ Jehenne recovered her hearing and speech only when she placed her head down on the tomb⁶⁵. Thomas of Voudai touched his eye to the tomb⁶⁶. One account spoke of the space between the tomb and the wood covering that allowed people to place their head and their hands atop the tomb in order to kiss it⁶⁷. Guillot took dust from a rock on the tomb and rubbed it into his ulcers to effect his cure⁶⁸. The same impulse operated at other cult sites after Louis' canonization. At Evreux, several people received a cure at the moment they touched [*tetigisset*] the high altar⁶⁹. At Poissy, where Louis had been born and baptized and where Philip the Fair had founded a

⁵⁷ As was noted by Chennaf/Redon, p. 76-77.

⁵⁸ GSP Mir. 2, p. 11; Fragment, p. 23; GSP Mir. 3, p. 14. According to Alan Hindley, Frederick Langley, and Brian Levy, *Old French-English Dictionary*, Cambridge University Press, 2000, a "toise", (*tensa* in Latin) is an unit measurement of approximately six feet; thus the distance to the high altar was about eighteen feet.

⁵⁹ GSP Mir. 53, p. 167.

⁶⁰ GSP Mir. 54, p. 170. See also Mirs. 3 and 11. Chennaf/Redon, p. 77.

⁶¹ GSP Mir. 58, p. 179.

⁶² Fragments, p. 28, n° 67; and 37, n° 142; GSP Mir. 4, p. 19.

⁶³ GSP Mir. 6, p. 22.

⁶⁴ GSP Mir. 34, p. 102.

⁶⁵ GSP Mir. 53, p. 166-167.

⁶⁶ GSP Mir. 8, p. 28.

⁶⁷ GSP Mir. 38, p. 114-115.

⁶⁸ GSP Mir. 7, p. 26; an ancient tradition in relic adoration; Sigal, *L'homme et le miracle*, p. 46.

⁶⁹ Evreux Mirs. 7, 11, 15.

Dominican convent in his honor, it was, not surprisingly, the baptismal font which, as a secondary relic, one touched [*tetigit* again] to effect the miracle⁷⁰.

The vow and the visit to the tomb were both elements of the «contract relationship» between saint and devotees that was common in the expectations of late medieval devotion⁷¹. As the supplicants in this hierarchical relationship of reciprocity, pilgrims who visited the tomb might give an offering. Among those who came to the tomb (the poor), often this was a gift to Louis, in advance of a cure, and often came in the form of a wax candle, potentially quite large ones in the shape of the leg, or the arm, or the size of the sick child they hoped would be cured. Candles were sold at the door of the church; one man who did not have enough money for a hostel still bought one there before approaching Louis at his tomb⁷². Other votive offerings might be left. A butcher and his wife hung the desiccated boil that had grown over their daughter's right eye above Louis' tomb as proof and in thanks⁷³. Images of pilgrims at Louis' tomb show supplicants offering candles, coins, and other votives⁷⁴. Another man, cured of failed eyesight, took the cross, vowing a pilgrimage overseas in thanks to God and Louis⁷⁵. This too, all conformed to late medieval praxis⁷⁶.

Remembering and Seeing

If the local, non-elite devout were impelled to Louis' tomb and to ask for his intercession because they heard that he was doing miracles at St.-Denis the reverse was true among elite miracle recipients. That is to say that many sought out Louis for miraculous aid *because of* their existing knowledge of and belief in his sanctity. Instead of «hearing about» Louis' miracles, they «remembered» Louis, his life and virtue, and the miracles they had heard about. For these men and women, their interaction with the saintly Louis was personal, individual, socially and emotionally (rather than contractually) reciprocal. As saint, Louis had a personality, an identity rooted in his biography; the relationship with the saint was two-way; and he retained, in his saintliness, his royal persona.

Awareness and knowledge of Louis and his sanctity pre-existed the moment of need, and invocation was rooted in existing belief in his sanctity. Shortly after Louis' interment at St.-Denis, and four days into a debilitating, perhaps life-threatening, fever, Dudo, first Louis' and later Philip's personal physician, began to think of Louis [*il commença a penser au benoiet saint Loys*], and called on his old

⁷⁰ BLQRF Mir. 13, p. 166.

⁷¹ On this, see Sigal, *L'homme et le miracle*, p. 79-116.

⁷² GSP Mir. 18, p. 61. For the many instances of candle offerings, see Chennaf/Redon, p. 84, n. 33.

⁷³ GSP Mir. 6, p. 22.

⁷⁴ The images are engraving of the lost stained glass of the chapel of Saint Louis, and from the illustrated copy of Guillaume de Saint-Pathus, BnF fr. 5716, that dates to ca. 1330. Note that Brown believes the image at St.-Denis to represent an altar, not Louis' tomb; Brown, «Chapels», p. 295-299.

⁷⁵ GSP Mir. 8, p. 30.

⁷⁶ Vauchez, *Sainthood in the later Middle Ages*, p. 456; Finucane, *Miracles and Pilgrims*, p. 95-96; Sigal, *L'homme et le miracle*, p. 86-107; Sumption, *Pilgrimage*, p. 158-167.

sovereign for help : « My lord, the king, who is also thought to be saint, in a state where you honor God, as I served you, I now beg that you save me, who is in such great pain, and I will go one night to your tomb. »⁷⁷ This was a remarkably personalized exchange. Likewise, Nicolas Lalayg, a knight and a crusader who was to have accompanied Louis on the campaign to Tunis, fell into a debilitating depression after being abandoned by a companion⁷⁸. His report is revealing. After a pilgrimage to Notre Dame de Boulogne failed, when « he knew not what else to do... he considered the goodness and sanctity of the life of the aforementioned blessed saint Louis, which he had seen and heard about from others worthy of faith, he thought in his heart that our Lord would deliver him through his [Louis's] merits. »⁷⁹

Dudo and Nicholas had known Louis in life, but there were others who had not. A well-to-do priest from Bailli (in the diocese of Chartres) woke one morning with his face grotesquely swollen. Several days later, sitting on a seat near the altar where he had just celebrated mass, « blessed Saint Louis and his good life and the works that he did when he was alive came to his memory [*vint en son memoire*], and he believed, as he had heard it said, that Our Omnipotent Lord did miracles for the blessed saint Louis. »⁸⁰ He then invoked Louis' aid, and addressed him as « My Lord, Saint Louis » and « the Sergeant of the King of Kings »⁸¹ – an invocation that hinted at Louis' secular status in life. In 1275, Jean of Lagny, a priest from Toreigni who lived in Paris, in pain, with fever, and having lost the ability to speak, felt so close to death that he instructed that he be buried at Chaalis. Friends and family suggested other saints, but it was Jean who recalled Louis; Jean « remembered [*pensa en soi meesme*] how, when [Louis] was living, he lived a saintly life and had an honest manner and that he did many good works, and that he had always heard good things of him; and he conceived in himself great faith that he would be cured by his [Louis'] merits. »⁸² In 1274, a Parisian named Agnes (who appeared to be well-off, as she could afford to hire a wetnurse for her child) found her son dead and she « recalled to herself [*se remembra*] that she had heard of great examples of blessed Louis, formerly king of France, doing wonders and miracles » and invoked his aid, addressing him not merely as the blessed Saint Louis, but as « My Lord,

⁷⁷ GSP Mir. 19, p. 114. The miracle was also recorded by Guillaume de Chartres (#5).

⁷⁸ GSP Mir. 13, p. 42; his malady is described as : *grief maladie, tristece, melancolie et douleur et perece*.

⁷⁹ GSP Mir. 13, p. 43 : « Et come il fust venu a tel estat que il ne savoit plus que il deust fere, et regarda la bonté et la sainteé de la vie du benoiet saint Loys devant dit que il avoit veue et oÿe d'autre dignes de foi, il pensa en son cuer que Nostre Seigneur le deliverroit par les merites de lui. »

⁸⁰ GSP Mir. 39, p. 89 : « Il li vint en son memoire le benoiet saint Loys et la bonne vie de lui et les oeuvres que il fesoit endementieres que il vivoit, et il creoit, si come il avoit oÿ dire, que Nostre Sires tout puissant fesoit miracles pour le benoiet saint Loys. »

⁸¹ GSP Mir. 39, p. 89 : « Mon seigneur saint Loys » and « li serganz du roi des rois ».

⁸² GSP Mir. 50, p. 151-52 : « pensa en soi meesme coment le benoiet saint Loys endementieres que il vivoit avoit esté de sainte vie et de conversacion honeste et que il avoit fet mout de bonnes oeuvres, et que il avoit touzjours de lui oÿ bien, il conçut en soi grant fiance que il devroit par ses merites estres gueri. »

Saint Louis, friend of God. »⁸³ We have already cited the cellarer who evoked Louis' biography in talking about why he was a saint⁸⁴.

It was easier for the well-heeled to obtain Louis' help without displacing themselves. Marote was cured at her mother's invocation (*Mon seigneur saint Loys*), and not her pilgrimage⁸⁵. Agnes made her vow and promised to send a candle as tall as her son *if* Louis revived him⁸⁶. Katherine of Morbon, lady in waiting to the queen (Marie of Brabant), who was « sick with fever...remembered Blessed Louis [*ot memoire du benoiet Saint Loys*] whom she had once called upon during another sickness »⁸⁷ and was cured that night; there is no evidence that she ever went to the tomb. Whereas the poor had to go to St.-Denis and remain there in prayer for several days before receiving the benefits of intercession, the elite could ask and receive Louis' help on a promise of visiting his tomb after a cure had been effected⁸⁸. Jean of Brie, Lord of Aigues Mortes, sick with quartaine fever, vowed to Louis « whose holy life he had seen for thirty years, » and travelled to St.-Denis only after his cure⁸⁹. A Breton cleric « well known to the bishop of Maclou » travelling through Chartres, who, when he'd abandoned hope of being saved of sudden illness invoked « the help of the pious king, » promising to visit the tomb after his cure⁹⁰. A knight in the royal retinue, Jean de Chastenay, invoked Louis for a leg malady, and sent a proxy with a candle in his place to St.-Denis⁹¹. When better, he went to St.-Denis on horseback. As with the promise to go to the tomb, the gift was also conditional, delivered after, in thanks and recognition. The poor made the offering before, hoping for a miracle; the well-to-do visited and gifted the tomb when (if?) healed.

The importance of the tactile was not absent among those with social or institutional status, though they could benefit from it without having to displace themselves or even experience the discomfort of waiting nine days in a crowded and guarded sanctuary⁹². Farmer explained this in terms of the privileged access of elite to « private » relics. The best example of this is the story of Laurent de Marceaux,

⁸³ GSP Mir. 19, p. 65 : « mon seigneur le roi, le benoiet saint Loys » GSP Mir. 19, 65-66 : « Et quant la dite Agnés, mere du dit enfant, se remembra que ele avoit oï grant piece devant que le benoiet saint Loys, jadis roi de France, fesoit vertuz et mieracles pour ceus qui en leur besoing l'apeloient, ele ot Esperance en ce benoiet saint Loys et voa et dist ces paroles : 'Mon seigneur saint Loys, ami Dieu' ». Compare as well : GSP Mir. 40, p. 125-26.

⁸⁴ Fragments, p. 28, n° 76.

⁸⁵ GSP, Mir. 1, p. 6.

⁸⁶ GSP Mir. 19, p. 65-66.

⁸⁷ GSP Mir. 55, p. 172, « et ot memoire du benoiet saint Loys que ele avoit apelé en une autre maladie que ele avoit eue assez devant, et avoit aperceu le benefice et la grace de lui apertement. »

⁸⁸ Chennaf/Redon, p. 73-74 ; Farmer, p. 52 ; Le Goff, p. 695.

⁸⁹ GSP Mir. 61, p. 188. « il se voua par le dit de d'un chevalier au benoiet saint Loys de qui il avoit veu la sainte vie par trente anz. »

⁹⁰ GC Mir. 4, RHF vol. 20, p. 38. *coepit flagitare succursum, et pii regis Ludovici auxilium invocare : vovens et promittens, si Dominus sospitatem ei conferret, se confestim ipsius Regis visitare sepulcrum.*

⁹¹ GSP Mir. 60, p. 186.

⁹² Farmer, p. 53. Miracles were also recorded when contact was made with a hat of Louis' ; GSP Mir. 46.

the future abbot of Chaalis, who testified at the hearings of recovering from deadly fever when he wrapped himself in a wool cloak of Louis' that the sacristan kept in the treasury⁹³. Laurent benefited from Chaalis' connection to Louis, and in particular the fact that Louis' chamberlain, Pierre of Hisdeus, had brought the cloak back from overseas, after which it was kept in the sacristy as a relic. Like Laurent, Peter of Laon, a knight described as the « guardian of the Lord King Philip's sons », because of his status and connections, had access to « personal » relics of Louis and he used three hairs of Louis (« that he remembered he had ») to secure relief to an intolerable pain in his right hand⁹⁴. On the first touch, his arm felt better ; on the second, much better ; on the third, wholly normal. No need to go travel to the Abbey or wait for nine days⁹⁵.

The most striking characteristic of the experience available to elite men and women was the personalized and reciprocal interaction possible in a dream or vision⁹⁶. Perhaps our best and most famous example of this is Jean of Joinville. At the end of his *vie*, after recounting Louis' death, canonization, and translation, he explains that he saw Louis in his sleep. « In my dream I had the impression that I saw him outside my chapel at Joinville », he begins. Not only does Joinville not need to go to St.-Denis, Louis comes to him at Joinville. « He was, so it seemed to me, to be wonderfully happy and at ease in his heart. I too was very glad to see him in my castle, and I said to him, 'My lord, when you leave this place I will put you up at one of my houses in my town called Chevillon.' Laughing, he replied to me, 'My lord of Joinville, by the faith I owe you, I do not wish to leave here so soon.' » In thanks Joinville established an altar in his private chapel, personalizing, and even creating and possessing, his own cult site. And then he asked the new king (Philip IV) to provide him « relics of the true body of the saint and sent them to the said chapel of Saint Lawrence at Joinville. »⁹⁷

Joinville's exchange with his saint king was lovely, personal, and reciprocal. Their friendship – documented in Joinville's extraordinary narrative – may have demanded this intimacy. But Joinville was not the only person of means whom Louis privileged with a visionary visit. The first miracle that Guillaume de Chartres recorded was a vision of the wife of a squire in the king's household. Guillaume relates that, before she learned of Louis' death, this lady (*matrona*) had a vision : She saw the king enter the Sainte-Chapelle, amidst a crowd of bystanders, and walking up to an altar before which he prostrated himself, placed his hand on the

⁹³ GSP Mir. 31, p. 37-41. W. C. Jordan, *Unceasing Strife, Unending Fear: Jacques de Thérines and the Freedom of the Church in the Age of the Last Capetians*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2005, p. 38-39. L. Carolus-Barré, *Le procès de canonisation de Saint Louis (1272-1297): Essai de reconstitution*, ed. H. Platelle, *Collection de l'École Française de Rome* 195, Rome, l'École Française de Rome, 1994, p. 127-28, 237-38.

⁹⁴ GC Mir. 6, p. 39.

⁹⁵ Farmer, p. 53-55. See also GSP Mir. 46, p. 140-142, for the wife of a former squire, who was able to battle a flood in her cellar with a hat Louis had owned.

⁹⁶ On the saintly dream/vision see M. Goodich, « The Role of the Dream in Thirteenth-Century Hagiography », *Procession, Performance, Liturgy, and Ritual*, Ottawa, The Institute of Mediaeval Music, 2007, p. 175-189.

⁹⁷ Joinville, § 766-767. Translation taken from J. of Joinville and G. of Villehardouin, *Chronicles of the Crusades*, trans. C. Smith London, Penguin, 2008, p. 225.

altar, and offered a sacrifice to the Lord. Louis was wearing the purple hat that he had not worn in a long time, and had a « truly splendid and serene expression. »⁹⁸ After this, another man, in a similar but not quite as splendid attire, also turned to the altar, and joined his hands in prayers. Later that day, her husband returned from the palace, grief stricken, with the news of the deaths of both Louis and his son John Tristan⁹⁹. In the same vein, Jehanne of Louvetaines, a nun at Longchamp (founded by Louis' sister, Isabelle) who had been sick for three years vowed herself to Isabelle and then had a dream-vision in which she saw pilgrims going to Louis' tomb but could not join them; Isabelle brought her before Louis at his tomb and interceded with Louis for Jehanne and Louis made the sign of the cross, and she awoke cured. Jehanne also describes how in her dream she saw a long procession of nobly attired and crowned kings, with Louis at the end of the procession¹⁰⁰. Another miraculous dream-vision (which could also be categorized as a dreamlike pilgrimage) was afforded the priest who had made plans to be buried at Citeaux¹⁰¹. After (as we saw) recalling Louis' life and works, Jean de Lagny vowed that, if God would heal him, he would visit Louis tomb at St.-Denis. In the tenth day of his illness, Jean dreamt – he did not know if he woke or slept – that he was in the monks' choir at St.-Denis. Though the church was dark, the tomb, around which were many ailing people, seemed to be surrounded in light by the many candles that had been given as offerings. In his vision, Jean saw Louis dressed « as he had seen him many times before » in a sleeved cloak and cloth hat, walking towards the tomb in order to cure the supplicants. As Louis passed Jean he told him to place his own hand on his side, and he would be cured. And when Jean awoke, he found his right hand on his left side, and the pain much alleviated. And finally, it was Louis very much in his personal and royal guise who appeared to Dudo, his personal physician, in what constitutes the most extraordinary visionary experience with the saint king. Dudo was an intimate of both Louis and the court; he served as Louis' physician in Carthage, attended him at his death, and returned with Philip III to Paris. He recounted his dream vision directly to Guillaume de Chartres the next morning, and his entered Guillaume's account as the thirty-eighth miracle¹⁰². Not long after Louis' burial at Saint-Denis, and while in the retinue of the new king at Saint-Germain-en-Laye, Dudo fell gravely ill with an acute fever. He returned to Paris, but did not recover and, the doctors despairing, he prepared for death. But he invoked Louis, promising to go to St.-Denis if Louis might save him. That night, in sleep, he found himself at Louis' tomb; he saw Louis, dressed in a long white dalmatic embroidered

⁹⁸ GC Mir. 1, RHF v. 20, p. 37 : « habens vultum valde splendidum et serenum. »

⁹⁹ GC 1, p. 37-38.

¹⁰⁰ S. L. Field, *The Writings of Agnes of Harcourt : The Life of Isabelle of France and the Letter on Louis IX and Longchamp*, Notre Dame, Ind., University of Notre Dame Press, 2003, p. 84-87, Mss. 26 and 27. There are actually two separate miracle accounts that are not entirely consistent (in the way that dreams are not entirely consistent) but seem to relate a single visionary experience. At this time in Longchamp's history, the nuns were overwhelmingly of elite background. S. L. Field, *Isabelle of France : Capetian Sanctity and Franciscan Identity in the Thirteenth Century*, Notre Dame, Ind., University of Notre Dame Press, 2006, p. 98.

¹⁰¹ GSP Mir. 50, p. 151-153.

¹⁰² GC Mir. 5, p. 39. Also GSP Mir. 38, p. 113-117.

with gold flowers, holding the royal scepter, and wearing a jewel-encrusted gold crown¹⁰³. As with Joinville, Dudo's Louis was cheerful and happy. And they spoke (in Latin ! said Dudo). Louis said « Behold, I am here ; what is it ? You have called me many times. » And then, after Dudo asked for his intercession, Louis replied « Have no fear ; you will recover from this illness » and explained that he had a tumor in his head, which the envisioned saint proceeded to extract. The description is fantastic. Louis took Dudo's head in one hand, and split open Dudo's head « between the nose and the left eyebrow », and with his other finger, pulled out the nut-sized tumor¹⁰⁴. He then said to Dudo « As long as this was in your head, you could not be well. » Dudo was better the next morning, and his two doctors concurred that this could only owe itself to a miracle.

The examples of elite « dream visions » of Louis were all to men and women who had known Louis in life or had had some connection to the court. In this sense, we cannot generalize to « the elite » broadly speaking. The same is true for the fact that some members of the elite had privileged access to the secondary relics. The examples of elite, propertied men or women who had known Louis in life and experienced a miracle are few, and it stands to reason that one would be more likely to have a dream interaction with the saint king if one had had actual interactions with the living king. But this is itself a point worth making, since those of lower standing would have had less access – even to a king as determined as Louis to make himself available to the poor as Louis – than those in the circles of power.

Final thoughts

I have hoped to make three overall points in this piece. 1) The bargain that the rich, elite, and connected made with Louis was strikingly different than the one the non-elite and the poor had to make, and their experience of the miraculous were accordingly different ; the elite invoked Louis, conditionally promised to go to his tomb, and then perhaps to travel to St.-Denis or send a gift ; the poor had to go to the tomb, pray and fast for days on end. 2) The bulk of those who went to St.-Denis to seek Louis' help – who, as we know from Farmer, were of low social station – did so because they heard he was effective and it was his effectiveness that mattered. His saintly identity extended little beyond this and seemed to have nothing to do with his life as holy king. Thus, for the majority of *miraculés* – the poor who sought Louis' intercession at his tomb – Louis was unindividuated as a saint. Their experience of the miraculous thus conformed to late medieval praxis in its expectations and prescriptions, and the result was interactions that were prescribed and ritualized. 3) By comparison, for the elite, Louis' sanctity was imbued with the qualities of his saintly life and his individuality as a king. Elite men and women – either because they had known Louis in life or because of their elevated station – possessed awareness of his biographical and saintly identity, and their experience of the miraculous was consequently different. Their miraculous experiences were personal, emotional, and unique, rather than patterned, prescribed and ritualized. They called

¹⁰³ The detail about the golden embroidery is absent in GC.

¹⁰⁴ The saint as surgeon in a vision is a medieval trope ; Sigal, *L'homme et le miracle*, p. 139-140.

upon the help of a saint whom they had known, or knew of, for his saintliness, and they were often able to do this at their home.

There are two frames against which to assess these findings : First, what does this say about where Louis fits into the larger history of sanctity and miracles ? And, second, what does this say about the role of Louis' thaumatological identity in terms of image of Capetian kingship and the particular sacrality of the royal image ?

Le Goff has said that, when it came to his miracles, Louis was a saint like any other¹⁰⁵. Indeed, when we read the evidence for Louis as a miracle worker at his tomb (or via other relics) against the findings of Pierre-André Sigal for the eleventh and twelfth centuries or Ralph Finucane for England, we find that the experience of the miraculous for Saint Louis conforms in large to the general shape of devotion in the Middle Ages. It was primarily the non-elite who sought out miracles at the shrine ; they brought gifts (for example, candles) and supplicated in prayer. Contrariwise, the richer and elite, whether personally connected to the court or simply of higher status, experienced the miraculous in more individualized ways ; they found unique, often more comfortable, ways of interacting with the saint. In this individuation as well, the picture reflects what we know about late medieval practice in general. That is, by and large, in the practice of the miraculous, Louis was typical of his saintly cohort.

The issue of the relationship of social status and miracles has different implications when we frame it against Louis' role in the development of Capetian sanctity and sacrality. Here, the implications invite reassessment, since they suggest that the popular reputation of sanctity that he was said to have enjoyed in life, as king Louis, may have been less widespread, less well-known, or less societally deep-rooted than sometimes supposed. Devotion to Louis, and belief in his sanctity, during his lifetime and immediately after his death, was thus rooted primarily in the elite who then pushed for his canonization. Indeed, it was the elite who testified at the canonization proceedings about the quality of Louis' life and character – his *conversatio*. The non-elite, the poor, the ordinary Frenchmen and women, testified only to his miracle working. In turn, this also demonstrates that it was primarily to the elite that Louis was a *royal* saint in any meaningful way ; that the link between sanctity and royalty in Louis that was used to bolster Capetian sacral identity was in fact manifest most strongly to a small circle of those connected to the royal court or the circles of elite authority more broadly. In the age of Philip the Fair, in the city of Philip the Fair, the 'propaganda' of Philip the Fair may well have, like a drop of oil in a cup of water, remained cohered and suspended only at the top of France's social order.

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¹⁰⁵ Le Goff, p. 699.